

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
MUSEUM PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PLAN
April 1998

**Fish and Wildlife Service
Plan for Managing Museum Property Collections**

I. Background

A 1990 Office of the Inspector General's (IG) audit found deficiencies in how Department of the Interior bureaus and offices were managing their museum property collections. Under the direction of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB), the Department has undertaken a program to locate and account for museum property and initiate necessary preservation and protection measures. A Department wide museum property committee has developed policy, guidance, and standards for bureaus to use in improving the care of their collections. Departmental guidance is found in 411 DM.

The Service is responsible for about 3.1 million objects (see attached table 1), including archaeological materials, artwork, wildlife mounts and specimens, World War II aircraft and equipment, historic objects and documents related to agency's history, and paleontological materials. Approximately 15 percent of the total number of objects is maintained by Service units, while the remaining materials are on loan to non-Federal and foreign repositories. The number and size of collections continue to grow as a result of cultural resource studies completed in response to the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. It is important to note that property seized and disposed of by the Service's Law Enforcement program is not covered under this plan. Seized property is managed under separate regulations and policies found under 50 CFR 12.

The FY 1997 FWS annual museum property summary report indicates that 146 FWS units are responsible for managing museum property and that collections are on loan to 217 institutions. Responsibility for museum property collections has been reported at all administrative levels, e.g., the FWS Washington Office, Regional Offices, field stations and administrative sites such as the National Conservation Training Center.

The creation of the National Biological Service (and its subsequent transfer to the U.S. Geological Survey as the Biological Resources Division) resulted in the transfer of approximately 900,000 objects, specimens and associated records. Ten Service units reporting museum property were transferred to the BRD in 1996. Collections affected by the transfer included natural history and historical collections maintained at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum and Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge.

Service units reporting museum property completed a review of collections in 1991 to identify specific weaknesses and deficiencies in how collections were being managed. Information submitted by approximately 180 FWS units cited 14,932 deficiencies related to the management of museum property. This information has not been updated. Cited deficiencies include the lack of documentation and plans to account for and protect museum property, improper environmental conditions, and lack of staff expertise. The review did indicate, however, that many units meet Departmental standards in terms of certain requirements addressing physical storage space and fire security.

The survey and checklist information provided the basis for completing unit-specific Scope of Collections Statements (SOCS) and the timetables and funding estimates found in this document.

II. Vision Statement and Long-Term Objectives

Given the breadth of its collections and number of units involved in managing museum property, the FWS efforts to meet Federal and Departmental standards will require work to be phased in over a long-term basis. The exact timetable for completing this work is largely dependant upon available funding and FTEs. While work to identify and assess the condition of FWS collections located in non-FWS facilities continues, priority is being placed on meeting legal mandates and protecting collections in the possession of offices. The program's major objectives are to:

- a. identify FWS museum property collections;
- b. create policies, procedures and standards for the management of museum property;
- c. assess the condition of collections, identify deficiencies and initiate necessary corrective actions;
- d. provide for necessary conservation of museum property and ensure its adequate use and storage;
- e. integrate the protection and use of museum property within the FWS mission and various program objectives, specifically for interpretation, research, and education; and,
- f. develop a network of individuals and offices that are available to provide subject expertise and technical assistance to FWS units managing museum property.

III. Accomplishments

Interim guidance on preparing museum property scope of collection statements was first distributed to FWS Regional Offices in 1992.

All Service units responsible for managing museum property have completed Scope of Collection Statements. Where applicable, some offices have begun incorporating museum property planning needs into unit emergency and integrated pest management plans. One unit, the Desoto National Wildlife Refuge, has completed a comprehensive conservation plan for the Bertrand Steamboat Collection.

Museum property policies and standards were released in 1997 as part of the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual. These policies address guidelines for managing collections, environmental and security standards, data standards and reporting requirements and forms. The Service will continue to rely on the Department's two volume Museum Property Handbook for additional technical information and guidance on managing collections. The Service museum property policy (126 FW 1-3) is available on the FWS Web Site under the Directives Home Page.

To coincide with the release of final policy and guidelines, the FWS developed a museum property software package for units to track accession, catalog and loan information. The database was developed using Filemaker Pro v.3 which is a standard software package employed by many FWS units to track operations and maintenance information. Standards and reporting requirements reflect current Departmental policies found in 411 DM.

Each Regional Director has designated one individual as a Regional coordinator (on a collateral duty basis) to provide assistance to units and oversee the completion of program activities. None of the Regional coordinators has extensive training or experience in managing collections, although all possess a basic understanding of program objectives and standards for managing primarily archaeological collections. Regional coordinators have received, at a minimum, introductory training on the program's administrative and technical requirements and a few have attended an 80-hour curatorial methods training course.

Regional Offices have contacted various non-Service institutions to locate agency collections on loan. Inventories of these collections are pending. Information from the Departmental questionnaire sent to institutions in 1993 has been distributed to Regional Offices for use.

The D.C. Booth Historic Fish Hatchery in South Dakota has begun an active effort to identify and accession collections for storage in its archives building completed in 1995. The building contains offices and climate-controlled storage areas devoted primarily to the preservation of materials related to the history of fish culture. The facility's scope of collections statement was revised in 1997 to clarify and expand its role in maintaining Service collections.

The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), opened in 1997, contains many exhibits on the history of the Service, the

Department and other conservation events and people. A museum with permanent exhibits is scheduled for completion by the end of FY 1998. The NCTC hired a curator in spring 1998 to manage collections and oversee the maintenance of exhibits.

A number of other Service offices have made progress in identifying and protecting collections. Examples include work on protecting historic collections associated with the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and the Quilicene National Fish Hatchery. Work is also underway in the Washington Office's Division of Refuges and the Alaska Regional Office to conduct oral history interviews with retirees and identify sources of collections associated with the agency. Using Departmental interns, the Division of Refuges has compiled a substantial amount of information on sources of historical photos and documents associated with the agency's programs.

In response to Section 5 of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), Service Regional Offices completed their inventory of collections that contain human remains and associated materials for possible repatriation to tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. An agency wide inventory was submitted to the National Park Service and the Secretary's NAGPRA Committee in March 1996. Regional Offices are continuing with efforts to communicate with Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations over the repatriation of collections. The Service's Historic Preservation Officer participated in a panel discussion at the January NAGPRA Review Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., on efforts to comply with the Act.

IV. Plan for Meeting Program Requirements

In order to meet legal requirements and Departmental policies, the Service will continue efforts to bring the agency into full accountability for managing and protecting its museum property collections over a 10-year period. Major program goals and objectives outlined below have been adopted from the Departmental Manual. Estimated target dates for completing specific museum property activities are based upon information compiled through museum property summary reports.

target

<u>Task</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Develop Collections Management Policy Guidance	
a. Distribute DOI museum property handbooks for use among applicable FWS units.	Completed
b. Establish formal FWS museum property collections committee to provide technical assistance and guidance.	No action
c. Release agency policy and guidance on museum services.	Completed

<u>Task</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
2. Establish Minimally Adequate Storage and Preservation	
a. Issue storage standards.	Completed
b. Provide funding estimates necessary to correct facility deficiencies (security & fire; storage equipment, etc.).	On-going
c. Develop key control and written security measures and housekeeping procedures for applicable FWS units.	Completed
d. Assess storage conditions in FWS units.	2003
e. Establish museum environment monitoring in all applicable FWS units.	2003
f. Establish Collection Condition Survey as official document for monitoring FWS collections.	Completed
g. Complete fire and security surveys.	2003
h. Complete Collection Management Plans for all FWS units.	2007
i. Correct management deficiencies.	2009
j. Stabilize condition of museum property.	On-going
3. Establish Accountability for Museum Property	
a. Prepare and submit museum property survey report to DOI (and every year thereafter).	Completed
b. Develop cost estimates and target dates for completing cataloging of museum property collections.	1999
c. Comply with NAGPRA survey requirements.	Completed
d. Conduct annual inventory reconciliation (and every year thereafter).	1999
e. Develop FWS museum property inventory/accountability data standards.	Completed
f. Ensure that all applicable FWS units have approved Scope of Collection Statements.	Completed
g. Develop FWS forms for documenting museum property transactions.	Completed
h. Complete initial survey of non-FWS repositories to locate museum property.	Completed
i. Comply with NAGPRA inventory requirements	Completed
j. Prepare and submit museum property checklist report to DOI (every 4 yrs.).	2000
k. Accession all FWS museum property collections.	2003
l. Complete initial inventories of FWS museum property collections stored in non-FWS facilities.	2007
m. Catalog FWS museum property collections.	2009

<u>Task</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
4. Strengthen Curatorial Expertise	
a. Work with DOI to provide basic curatorial training to FWS employees.	Pending
b. Circulate Museum Property bulletins and technical information.	On-going
c. Initiate planning for FWS training curriculum and explore distribution of information via electronic media.	Pending

V. Program Oversight

Oversight responsibility for the program resides with the Assistant Director - Refuges and Wildlife at the national level.

The Division of Refuges, Washington Office, has been delegated lead responsibility for providing overall direction and coordinating activities related to the program. Policy development and day-to-day program coordination are collateral duties of the Service's Historic Preservation Officer. Each Regional Director has designated one or more individuals to coordinate functions within their respective Regions and with the Washington Office. The Service also participates in the Department's Property Partnership, Executive Museum Program Committee, and Interior Museum Program Committee.

This plan will be reviewed annually by the Service's Washington Office, in consultation with Regional coordinators, to monitor progress in meeting plan objectives, task items, and funding needs. Information collected from updated museum property reports, checklists, and inventories required under 411 DM 3.3 will be used to update funding needs and revise the schedule for completing major project objectives.

VI. Program Funding, Staffing, and Training Needs

In FY 1998, \$383,000 from the Service's Refuge Operations and Maintenance Activity has been allocated to Regions as Aarts and artifacts@ funding for activities directly associated with the Departmental program. Funding has been used for program oversight and coordination, compiling inventory information, providing technical assistance and purchasing equipment and supplies for field stations. Additionally, several Service units including the D.C. Booth Historic Fish Hatchery, the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge and the National Conservation Training Center receive additional operations and maintenance funding to maintain their collections, exhibits and facilities.

No permanent full-time FTEs have been hired using available Aarts and artifacts@ funding. Two FWS Regional Offices have hired full-time employees (one permanent position and one term

position) to complete basic program activities as a collateral duty within their respective Regions and the NCTC hired a full-time permanent curator in Spring 1998. The collection manager and curator position at the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge are currently vacant.

Based upon estimates developed by Regional Offices, an additional 13 FTEs are needed to fulfill the program's basic objectives and requirements. These positions would include a number of disciplines, including curators, archivists, collections managers, and museum and archival technicians. There are no plans to hire a full-time national curator to manage the program.

Data compiled from the 1991 museum property survey and the 1992 checklist indicate a number of program weaknesses in terms of planning for the preservation of collections and meeting museum property program standards. Regional plans, timetables, and cost estimates for bringing collections up to basic Departmental museum property standards have been used to create the accompanying table for all agency programs (Fisheries, Refuges, Law Enforcement, Ecological Services and Administration).

The Service does not offer any extensive formal training to its employees on museum property issues. Employees involved in managing museum property usually rely on NPS-sponsored training and courses offered by academic institutions to obtain skills. National and Regional coordinators will assist units in finding technical assistance for managing their collections when needed.

Future training needs are likely to vary from unit-to-unit depending upon the background of the individuals responsible for managing collections, the types of collections, and management deficiencies. Areas identified for future training emphasis are likely to include: museum property displayed in administrative areas; skills for assessing the unit's capability to store museum property; and, the management of natural history and biological collections. The Service is interested in exploring innovative, cost-efficient methods for training employees (either independently or jointly with other agencies) through circulation of technical bulletins and printed materials, various electronic media, or in combination with other related training courses (i.e., personal property management). Options for offering formal training through the Service's National Conservation Training Center have been discussed but not explored extensively.

TABLE 1

FWS Museum Collections By Category

<u>Category</u>	<u>Estimated Number of Objects</u> ¹
Archaeology	2,333,191 ²
Art	1092
Documents	55,720 items, 760 lf and 190 boxes
Ethnography	50
History	7,982
Paleontological	500,461+
Botany	13,189 plus 1 herbarium
Zoology	184,460
Geology	17
Environmental Samples	1,202
TOTAL	3,097,448+ items, 760 lf, 190 boxes & 1 herbarium

¹ As of September 1997

² Estimate based upon completed inventories and projected volume of bulk storage.

TABLE 2

Fish and Wildlife Service**Costs for Meeting Departmental
Museum Property Requirements**

Funding estimates reflect work reported in the Service's FY 1997 museum property annual report and total costs projected over a 10-year period needed to meet legal and Departmental museum property standards.

	<u>FY 1997 Funding</u>	<u>Additional Funding Needs: FY 1999-FY 2009</u>
1. Program Management	\$225,000 (4.5 FTEs)	\$3,350,000 (6 FTEs)
1. Coordination, Oversight and Training	\$190,000	\$800,000
2. Preparing Mandatory Planning Documents	\$20,000	\$2,500,000
Costs associated with preparing scope of collection statements, collection management plans, emergency management plans, conservation surveys and the annual DOI museum property report.		
3. Preparing Accountability and Protection Guidance	\$15,000	\$50,000

Costs associated with developing FWS standards and guidance on managing museum property.

2.	Documenting Collections	\$100,000 (2 FTEs)	\$3,500,000 (7 FTEs)
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Costs associated with recording accession, catalog, loan and deaccession information in FWS information systems, and conducting mandatory properties inventories.

3.	Storage Facilities	\$55,000	\$3,500,000
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Costs include FWS assistance to non-Federal facilities; evaluation of facility capabilities; and renovations and construction of facilities to meet minimum DOI preservation standards.

4.	Equipment and Materials	\$10,000	\$400,000
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Purchase of archival quality materials, fireproof safes, cabinets, etc., for storing collections, associated records and other documentation.

5.	Environmental Monitoring Equipment	\$0	\$70,000
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6.	Security Systems	\$20,000	\$200,000
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7.	Fire Protection Systems	\$5,000	\$400,000
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	Totals	\$415,000 (6.5 FTEs)	\$11,420,000 (13 FTEs)
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TABLE 1

Fish and Wildlife Service

Estimated Costs To Correct Museum Property
Collection Deficiencies

<u>Project Activity</u>	<u>Current Funding (FY 93)</u>	<u>Proposed Funding</u>
Storage facilities	--	\$1,313,000
Storage facility equipment/ materials	\$20,000	\$1,111,000
Environmental Monitoring Equipment	--	\$127,000
Security Systems	\$10,000	\$148,000
Fire Protection	--	\$164,000
Planning Documents	\$20,000	\$146,700
Preservation and Planning Procedures	\$20,000	\$134,000
Documentation (Accessioning, (cataloging, etc.)	\$70,000	\$555,000 ³
Personnel	\$120,500	\$80,000

³ Annual cost for documenting museum property from 1994-2008.

Total	\$383,000	\$4,891,700
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Note: Estimates are for measures to correct deficiencies and maintain collections at Departmental standards within FWS units and in non-FWS repositories.

Funding estimates do not reflect funding for the FWS National Conservation Training Center museum, exhibits and storage.

TABLE 1
Fish and Wildlife Service
Estimated Costs To Correct Museum Property
Collection Deficiencies

<u>Project Activity</u>	<u>FY 1993 Funding</u>	<u>New Funding FY 1994 - 2008</u>
Storage facilities	\$300	\$1,313,000
Storage facility equipment/ materials	\$14,600	\$1,111,000
Environmental Controls ¹	--	\$550,000
Security ²	--	\$2,000,000
Fire Protection	--	\$364,000
Collections Planning	\$24,100	\$1,200,000
Documentation (accessioning, (cataloging, etc.)	\$47,400	\$7,770,000 ³
NPS Reimbursement for Project Coordination	\$55,000	--
Program Oversight and Coordination	\$64,500	\$1,100,000
Total	\$247,000	\$15,408,000

Note: Funding estimates do not reflect funding for the proposed FWS National Education and Training Center museum and storage.

¹ Includes environmental monitoring and control equipment.

² Includes security procedures, surveys, studies, and protection and detection systems.

³ Approximately \$555,000 per fiscal year.